

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A system for permitting insertion or replacement of electronic cards, the system comprising:

(a) a scanner for scanning hardcopy elements, the scanner comprising:

(a1) an electronic component for performing at least one processing function on an electronic representation of the hardcopy element;

(a2) a first processor for directing operations of the scanner and for receiving directions that are passed to other components;

(a3) a field-installed electronic card that performs additional processing on the electronic representation of the hardcopy element; and

(b) a second processor electrically connected to the scanner for sending directions to the scanner processor which processor includes field-installed control code for directing the field-installed electronic card.

2. The system as in claim 1, wherein the scanner includes an electronic board into which the field-installed electronic card is inserted.

3. The system as in claim 1 further comprising a computer into which the second processor resides.

4. The system as in claim 1, wherein the field-installed electronic card includes a third processor.

5. A method for permitting insertion or replacement of electronic cards, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) obtaining access to a scanner which scans hardcopy elements and which includes an electronic component for performing at least one processing function on an electronic representation of the hardcopy element, and a

first processor for directing operations of the scanner and for receiving directions that are passed to other components;

(b) installing a field-installed electronic card that performs additional processing on the electronic representation of the hardcopy element;

(c) obtaining access to a second processor electrically connected to the scanner for sending directions to the scanner processor; and

(d) installing field-installed control code into the second processor for directing the field-installed electronic card.

6. The method as in claim 5 further comprising the step of installing the field-installed electronic card into an electronic board.

7. The method as in claim 5 further comprising the step of providing a computer into which the second processor resides.

8. The method as in claim 5 further comprising the step of providing a third processor on the field-installed electronic card.